

REMARKS

Reconsideration and the timely allowance of the pending claims, in view of the following remarks, are respectfully requested.

In the Office Action dated February 23, 2005, claims 26, 28-30, 37, and 39-41 and 4 were rejected, under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as allegedly being anticipated by Li '771 (US Pat. No. 5,772,771); claims 27 and 38 were rejected, under 35 U.S.C. §103(a), as allegedly being unpatentable over Li '771 in view of Tomoyasu '103 (US Pat. No. 5,900,103); and claims 26-32 and 37-43 were rejected, under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as allegedly being unpatentable over Tei '215 (US Pat. Pub. No. 2002/0011215) in view of Tomoyasu '103 and Li '771.

By this Amendment, claims 26, 28, 29, 37, 39 and 40 have been amended to provide a clearer presentation of the claimed invention, new claims 44 and 45 have been introduced, and claims 30 and 41 have been cancelled herein without prejudice or disclaimer. Applicants submit that no new matter has been introduced and that support for the new claim language may be found in the embodiments described in the initial disclosure. (*See, e.g., Specification*, pages 19-21; FIGs. 1, 6A).

Applicants respectfully traverse the prior art rejections, under 35 U.S.C. §103(a), for the reasons presented below.

As indicated above, independent claim 26 has been amended to positively recite that the gas introducing portion includes a gas passage with an inlet port that connects to a gas supply line and an outlet port that connects to a gas exhaust line. (*See, e.g., Specification*, pages 19-21; FIGs. 1, 6A). As described and depicted in the embodiments of the present invention, there are no other lines connected between the gas introducing portion and the second vacuum device, so that the gas evacuating line has a smaller exhaust conductance and gases and water components can be discharged from the gas introducing portion rapidly and efficiently.

In contrast, none of the applied references teach or suggest such a feature. For example, the Li '771 reference discloses a cleaning gas line **82**, which is connected to a common gas feed line **80** – but not connected to the disclosed manifold **36**. In so doing, the Li '771 structure specifically teaches that gas in the manifold **36** is evacuated by a vacuum pump **84** through the common gas feed line **80** and the cleaning gas line **82**. There is, however, nothing in Li '771 that teaches or even suggests that the gas introducing portion includes a gas passage with an outlet port that connects to a gas exhaust line.

For at least these reasons, Applicants submit that claim 26 cannot be deemed unpatentable in view of Li '771. Nor can claims 27-29 and 31-32, which depend from claim 26 and are patentable by virtue of dependency as well as for their additional recitations, be rendered unpatentable by Li '771. Accordingly, Applicants request the immediate withdrawal of the rejection of claims 26-29 and 31-32, under §103(a).

Moreover, independent claims 37 and 44 recite features that have been demonstrated as being patentable relative to claim 26, such as, that the gas introducing portion includes a gas passage with an outlet port that connects to a bypass line or a gas exhaust line, respectively. Accordingly, claims 37 and 44 are also patentable for at least the same reasons as presented regarding claim 26. And claims 38-40 and 42-43, which depend from claim 37 as well as claim 45, which depends from claim 44, are also patentable at least by virtue of dependency as well as for their additional recitations. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request the withdrawal of the rejection of claims 37-40 and 42-43, under §103(a).

Furthermore, the remaining references do nothing to cure the deficiencies of Li '771 identified above. In particular, neither the Tomoyasu '103 reference nor the Tei '215 reference remotely teach or suggest the use of a gas introducing portion that includes a gas passage with an outlet port that connects to a gas exhaust line. As such, none of the applied references, whether taken alone or in reasonable combination, teach or suggest the combination of features recited by independent claims 26, 37, and 42. Accordingly, Applicants request the immediate withdrawal of the additional §103(a)

rejection of claims 27 and 38 based on the combination of Li '771 and Tomoyasu '103 as well as the additional §103(a) rejection of claims 26-32 and 37-43 based on the combination of Tei '215, Li '771, and Tomoyasu '103.

All matters having been addressed and in view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully request the entry of this Amendment, the Examiner's reconsideration of this application, and the immediate allowance of all pending claims.

Applicants' Counsel remains ready to assist the Examiner in any way to facilitate and expedite the prosecution of this matter. Please charge any fees associated with the submission of this paper to Deposit Account Number 033975, Order No. 040258-0279274.

The Commissioner for Patents is also authorized to credit any over payments to the above-referenced Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

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